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September 3, 2025

Cloudflare
London

To Whom It May Concern,

I am hereby applying for the position of Engineering Director, Adoption at Cloudflare. I believe I would be a strong fit for this position, given my background as both developer and manager, particularly in SaaS businesses. When working for Zendesk I even had the pleasure of being a Cloudflare customer – I was leading the Operations team managing the Zendesk Help Center division, basically a Content Management System in the Zendesk application suite—a service that integrated extremely well with the core Cloudflare content delivery network, sporting custom certificates at scale and much, much more.

Unfortunately, I do not live within 50 miles of any of your hubs, but London is just a short hop by plane away from Copenhagen, where I live – so please hear me out – after all, the job description does mention that Cloudflare does not believe we all fit into neat boxes; perhaps this is where I stick out a bit.

There's a good chance I can make it to the office faster than by the M25.

I have managed in, and worked in, SaaS companies with global presence, I have done so in both development and operations; and actually at all levels of operations, including vendor management and maintenance of co-location setups – I even installed machinery personally; leading by example. I have plenty of experience working with online vendor dashboards, with a focus on monitoring and alerting; I know a good and functional UI when I see it, such as yours; but I do have experience across many different solutions: Datadog, AWS, Solarwinds, Splunk and much more. I would be eager to use my experience and expertise to lead the Cloudflare product experience into the future. I've seen and tried countless development models and frameworks, and it's clear that Cloudflare excels on technical quality and user experience. AWS is a mess in comparison.

I see Cloudflare leading by providing clear working solutions to customers.

Obviously, a functional and concise tech stack can be made to ensure this lead position; I know that, because I've been spearheading such implementations before. The aim is not to select 'framework-of-the-week' but to make solid fact-based decisions, together.

In my capacity as Chief of Staff to the CTO, I have been attending enterprise sales and technical support, I know what their focus is—and can act on this; I managed and mentored directors in Support, Operations and Professional Services in dealing with complex technical matters for enterprise customers and partners. My technical staff delivered dashboards, monitoring, integration aid and solutions with immediate and measurable effect on sales. Also, I am an eager hobbyist, using hobby projects for education, to stay up to date. It is remarkable how well hobby

projects can scale to enterprise needs if done right. Please see my project links later in this cover letter. I've been running Linux since 1996, and I've never looked back. It just works. I might consider FreeBSD for the kqueue implementation though.

Cloudflare, being a product lead company with a freemium model, is positioning the product as the major upsell contributor; and I see that it is working extremely well. I have an account personally, and I will not hesitate to buy services when I need - my confidence in the solution is high. As the product suite grows it is crucial for Cloudflare to keep the user interface performant and precise—thus instilling confidence. Regardless of the state of the internet and the customer infrastructure, Cloudflare is there, solid and ready to help; this is the vision that I would bring.

I see Cloudflare positioning itself uniquely in the market as being both product driven yet technically innovative and responsible. The services that Cloudflare delivers, such as web-workers, need to be considered carefully from a technical perspective in order to work reliably at the scale of your operations. Therefore it's a pleasure to see, in your documentation and tooling, that all Cloudflare offers come with clearly documented product limits, ensuring that customers know exactly what to expect. Not having product limits regularly tears down SaaS services; real technicians know that limits are needed to ensure reliability since resources will always be limited—this is a very valuable, mutual realization in a customer-vendor relationship.

The best thing you can do to manage support and outbound sales cost is to have the product follow the customer journey and present options intuitively as the business case grows. Nothing beats that; I have personally lead product features from inception to launch, ensuring that the technical aim is not lost in translation and meeting transcripts; as is, unfortunately, a risk in large IT organisations. Undoubtedly my technical background and communicative skills are helping me out here.

If my resume does not clearly document that I fulfill the needed key competencies, then allow me to add some more detail here: even from an early point in my career have I been able to transform team dynamics to the better, there has often been dire situations in operations when dealing with SaaS infrastructure and its growing pain—I've lead my teams and other teams through distress and problems, growing together and delivering high pace deployment rates as well as reducing downtime; specifically for Zendesk, even with an aging application, I managed to improve uptime from 99.9% to 99.95% at no extra cost, through operational excellence and plain simple reconfiguration to be compliant with internet standards. In fact my operations teams had time to spare and was implementing product features when needed.

I would be happy to provide references that will testify to my immersive organisational skills; founded on technical excellence, curiosity and customer focus. I utterly enjoy transforming team dynamics, aligning stakeholders—and delivering products that live up to market demands. This enabled me to lead a new data center to completion in just 3 weeks, when experience said 6 months.

Obviously I would need to prove this level of technicality; while my direct contributions to open source are not numerous, they're delicate; I strive to improve what is already there, rather than delivering yet another half-hearted implementation. See for example this update to an implementation of the trie data structure in Rust: github.com/michaelsproul/rust_radix_trie. I needed it for a project dealing with collation in Unicode, doing locale-based string sorting.

In fact I have been following the Rust language for many years and it is now my go-to language (even though go-to is considered harmful). I could mention my Rust based basic webapp example: github.com/jakobdalsgaard/basic-webapp.

As well as the WiFi bridge I did for a Wallas diesel boat heater; the software runs on an ESP32 embedded device, which shows the versatility of the Rust language: gitea.dalsgaard.net/dalsgaard/wallas-esp32c3. Reverse engineering the serial interface to the heater was a real challenge.

Being an avid beekeeper, I even managed to use this hobby for tech purposes: blog.dalsgaard.net/honey-we-need-a-website.html. This is a walk-through of configuring Nginx for maximum security score; I see network and security as some of my core technical focus points. Wireshark is one of my preferred tools and I navigate the 7 layers effortlessly. There are some proprietary high-availability protocols that I'm not fully into; but I've seen a lot.

I would also like to mention that I've been lucky enough to meet your CTO, John Graham-Cumming, at the London office for an event some years ago—he's an inspiring leader, and not only technically; he would probably appreciate this resume and cover letter being produced in \LaTeX :-) – his blog post from July 2019 on the Cloudflare outage is stellar; not only for its technical in-depth explanations, but also from a customer- and employee-confidence point of view—having such a lighthouse example as a beacon to navigate by makes leading considerably easier.

I've been a long-time admirer of the Cloudflare journey – I would be a great addition to your team. I am therefore looking forward to hearing from you,

Cordially,

Jakob Dalsgaard